

# Disrupting County Lines Policing Strategy 2024 – 2027

## Our Mission

Our mission is to prevent County Lines, and the associated violence and exploitation.

County Lines have a devastating impact on communities and brings serious harm to people, through the supply of drugs and associated violence and exploitation of vulnerable people.

We are building on the successes of the Home Office County Lines programme, which since 2019, has invested in the policing response leading to significant improvements in how forces identify, respond and disrupt County Lines-related criminality and exploitation.

Despite this work, criminals are continuing to operate County Lines, exploiting children and vulnerable adults, requiring forces to continue working together to effectively tackle this cross-border crime. This plan provides the framework for forces to use as they disrupt the threat.

### The strategy aims to:

- Prevent people engaging in County Lines, and the associated violence and exploitation
- Proactively safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm
- Better prepare communities by building resilience against the harms of County Lines
- Relentlessly pursue offenders, including Organised Criminal Groups, Urban Street Gangs and individuals running County Lines

# Working together

## Our achievements to date:

- **5,627** County Lines have been closed
- **16,536** people have been arrested
- **8,817** individuals have been referred police by safeguarding
- There are now fewer County Lines coming from Exporter Forces and fewer children involved in County Lines from those areas.
- We have launched the NCLCC Power App for Law Enforcement, a central resource for County Lines knowledge and practitioner guidance.

We have worked with partners such as the Children's Society and Ivision Trust delivering online and face to face awareness sessions to parents and carers, those best placed to identify first signs of exploitation.

Merseyside Police Taskforce's Operation Stonehaven worked with over 60 partners to deliver intervention pathways to prevent young / vulnerable people being drawn into serious organised crime and county lines activity.

Greater Manchester Police Taskforce's Programme Challenger Breaking Barriers roadshow 'Crossing the Line' was delivered to 98 Manchester primary schools reaching in excess of 4,500 nine to eleven year olds.

West Midlands Police Taskforce ran a Public Health campaign with 6,000 people contacted following a series of drug-related deaths warning them of the increased risk of harm linked to the localised supply of a synthetic opioid.

Operation Orochi, Met County Lines Taskforce, have proactively rescued 76 children from County Lines, referring them to specialist support services, and charged 62 individuals with Modern Slavery.

BTP County Lines Taskforce have achieved 24 charges under the Modern Slavery Act. All were commenced through a child being encountered by Police on the Rail Network, away from their homes.

# Our plan

	Prevent	Protect	Prepare	Pursue
Goal	Preventing people engaging in County Lines, and the associated violence and exploitation	Being proactive in our approach to safeguarding that better protects children and vulnerable adults from harm	Better prepare communities to build more resilience against the harms of County Lines	Relentlessly pursue offenders, including Organised Criminal Groups, Urban Street Gangs and individuals running County Lines
Ambition	<p>Target the areas in which County Lines are concentrated with visible Neighbourhood policing &amp; community-engagement to reduce crime</p> <p>Undertake training within Policing that promotes a contextual safeguarding approach &amp; educates how to recognise vulnerability and respond effectively</p> <p>Utilise all judicial powers available such as criminal and civil orders to prevent / disrupt offenders from being involved in County Lines</p> <p>Maximise our offender management capabilities in partnership (e.g. HM Prison &amp; Probation Service)</p>	<p>Consistently take a trauma informed approach that better recognises vulnerability &amp; enables appropriate safeguarding interventions</p> <p>Build strong working relationships with key partners, so we better understand our service and 'what works' when referring to support provision</p> <p>Enhance our response to missing episodes linked to County Lines, recognising the serious risk of harm that occurs</p> <p>Develop our understanding of cuckooing &amp; grooming, e.g. a victim of grooming is unlikely to recognise they're exploited; Sharing best practice nationally</p>	<p>Raise awareness through County Lines-themed public information campaigns e.g. via Crimestoppers</p> <p>Engage communities through Neighbourhood Policing to improve the feelings of safety &amp; reduce perceived ASB</p> <p>Delivery of coherent and consistent County Lines training product, to internal / external partners &amp; the public</p> <p>Gather information and intelligence to better inform our understanding of the threat, harm &amp; risk arising from the County Lines drugs supply business model, including how that shifts in response to law enforcement activity</p>	<p>Identify &amp; close drugs lines, prioritising those causing the most threat, harm &amp; risk</p> <p>Disrupt / dismantle organised crime groups, urban street gangs &amp; individuals by targeting the Line Holders – those controlling the lines – to reduce violence &amp; exploitation</p> <p>Utilise data-led and precise Policing operations for maximum efficiency &amp; effectiveness</p> <p>Go after criminals using all available legislation, especially Modern Slavery laws</p> <p>Work in partnership across Law Enforcement to tackle this cross-border threat</p>
Success factors	<p>Fewer County Lines</p> <p>Greater awareness of vulnerability &amp; wider use of contextual safeguarding responses</p> <p>Increased referrals to specialist support providers</p> <p>Greater use of orders for offender management</p>	<p>Increased referrals to statutory safeguarding partners and the NRM</p> <p>Greater use of the NCLCC power application across a broader range of Forces – our County Lines knowledge hub for practitioners</p> <p>Cuckooing – Increased awareness, recording and safeguarding</p>	<p>Delivery of information campaigns</p> <p>Annual strategic threat assessment</p> <p>More County Lines intelligence provided by communities</p> <p>More frontline police officers &amp; staff receiving County Lines training</p>	<p>Numbers of drugs lines closed</p> <p>Numbers of Line Holders arrested &amp; prosecuted for Drugs Supply / Modern Slavery</p> <p>Major and Moderate disruptions achieved</p> <p>Weapons and criminal proceeds (e.g. cash) seized / forfeited</p>



# Our ambitions

Preventing County Lines	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target the areas in which County Lines are concentrated with visible Neighbourhood patrols &amp; community-engagement.</li> </ul>	By 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise all judicial powers available such as criminal and civil orders to prevent &amp; disrupt offenders from involvement in County Lines.</li> </ul>	By 2027

Proactive in our approach to safeguarding that better protects children and vulnerable adults from harm	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve greater consistency in identifying and responding to vulnerability.</li> </ul>	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build strong working relationships with key partners, so we better understand our service and ‘what works’.</li> </ul>	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with key stakeholders, such as Catch22, to help young people at risk of County Lines involvement.</li> </ul>	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCLCC will work to better understand the links between missing episodes and County Lines through strategic analysis.</li> </ul>	December 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will enhance the response to children missing and at risk of serious harm from County Lines.</li> </ul>	December 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop our understanding of cuckooing and grooming, identifying and sharing best practice.</li> </ul>	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCLCC will identify and share best practice to achieve a more consistent response to cuckooing across Forces.</li> </ul>	March 2025

Better prepare communities to strengthen resilience	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are working with The Children’s Society to promote the #LookCloser campaign.</li> </ul>	March 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage communities through Neighbourhood Policing to improve the feelings of safety &amp; reduce perceived Anti-Social Behaviour.</li> </ul>	By 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of county lines training products to partners and the public.</li> </ul>	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce Annual Strategic Assessments.</li> </ul>	End of each financial year

Relentlessly pursue offenders	Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will continue closing County Lines, raising our ambition to deliver 1,000 more.</li> </ul>	August 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will maximise the disruption of County Lines gangs through focussed operational activity.</li> </ul>	By 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will target high harm offenders controlling drugs lines, reducing associated violence such as County Lines-related homicides.</li> </ul>	By 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop our capabilities to tackle an evolving threat.</li> </ul>	March 2025

**In order to achieve all of our ambitions there needs to be a national collective response – Government, Law Enforcement, Education, Public Sector Support Services and Charities, all pulling the same direction and delivering the same message.**